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FORMER KOREAN RED LEADER SAYS
NORTH KOREAN ARMY MORALE LOW

The following are extracts from a round-table discussion participated in by O Che-to, procurator; Ch'oe Un-mu, chief investigator, Seoul Police Bureau; Gen Yi Son-kun, director, political training bureau, National Defense Ministry, Taehan Republic; and Chong Paek, a partisan in the One March Independence Movement of 1919 and one of the most prominent Communist leaders of Korea until his recent conversion to a pro-Nationalist viewpoint:

Yi: What is your estimate of the morale of the People's Army?

Chong: Generally the morale of the soldiers reflects precisely the morale of the people, inasmuch as the former are the sons whose interest is humanly related with the latter. We may safely conclude that North Korea's military forces' morale is quite low and will remain so as long as the morale of their parents and families remains low due to political suppression and economic exploitation by the Communists. Undoubtedly, some of the soldiers have begun to realize that their cause is not necessarily consistent with love of the people and country. The more they feel this inconsistency the weaker their morale will become.

O: It is said that there are feuds within the puppet regime, among the Yen-an-educated group, the Soviet-educated group, the Korean-educated group, and the group of Communists who come from South Korea. What is your comment?

Chong: Although it is true that there are certain differences among the Communists of different origin, such differences may not develop to an extent that would disrupt the Communist administration, for it is easy under the totalitarian government to control such feuds and prevent internal dissention. The all-powerful North Korean Labor Party, led by the Soviet group, dominates the other elements, particularly South Korean Communists represented by the South Korean Labor Party, whose influence is relatively meager. Nevertheless, it is something like, "sleeping in the one bed, each having his own dreams."

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Ch'oe: It has been reported that military installations are being built extensively in Wonsan, Ch'ongjin, and other places on the eastern coast of North Korea. Is this true?

Chong: It is true, although some reports are exaggerated.

O: The South Korean Communists who have gone north are known to have been placed in quite high positions, but at the same time, they are not given full confidence and their actions are restricted under surveillance. Did you find such things as travel restrictions or exclusion from military installation areas while you were in North Korea?

Chong: During my stay in North Korea I confined myself mostly to P'yongyang. I knew that there were restricted areas, and that the North Korean authorities forbade our access to such areas.

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